

## Wichita Daily Eagle

## CALLED A FISH OF APRIL.

THAT'S THE FRENCH OF IT; BUT  
HERE IT IS "APRIL FOOL"

Tricks of the Village and the City—The Old Times—All Fools Day—The "Hill" of Hindostan—Its Possible Origin—Some Medieval Fables.

"By George, there's a dollar!" Down goes the eager boy's hand to grasp the bright silver disk which lies so temptingly in the edge of the gutter. He grasps it and is rising, when "O—couch—O Lordy!" he yells, and, flinging down the dollar, thrusts his burnt fingers in his mouth, while a roar of laughter issues from the convenient grocery, where the practical jokers are on the watch. The boy hurries away, and the jokers proceed to repeat the dollar for the next "April fool."



THE SILVER DOLLAR SELL.

This is the old standard joke of the village. It has been played ever since silver dollars were coined, and probably will be for many years to come, for where is the boy, not strictly on guard, who could refrain from picking up a dollar? And it is wonderful how long a hot silver dollar will hold its heat. A more innocent form of the same joke is to drill a hole through the dollar and nail it firmly down; then silver over the head of the nail with some of the most cheap "plating" fluids. The finder may think out of ten will grasp at the treasure and be—"left." The laugh is just as good, and no fingers are burnt.

The "bricked hat" has been played upon ten that extra straddles is required. It is very seldom anyone that a man will pass long enough to kick a hat off the sidewalk, but to a boy a derelict hat is a temptation indeed. It sometimes proves a cruel joke. The boy, full of vigorous life and animal spirit, swinging gaily along, comes to an innocent looking old beaver hat, passing for a good draw back, he launches a forty-pound kick at the target—alas! there is a big and ragged stone in it. For an instant he feels as if every bone in his foot were splintered. The pain is awful. The jokers in ambulant laughter, and the victim cannot restrain his tears. Nowadays, however, the jokers often kick the empty hat around as the victim is coming in sight, and only slip the stone under it in time to catch him.

When the "Washington movement" was sweeping the United States an ingenious dealer invented what he called a "temperance wine glass." Standing on the sidewalk it looked exactly like a handsome glass well filled with ruby wine, but when the guest turned it up at his lips there was no wine and the loud laugh assumed him an "April fool." The glass was double, the wine being between the inner and outer portions. This hint and others to work and very ingenious imitations were produced by which the victim could be made to believe that cake and wine, fruits and salt were before him; but it was all a harmless deceit—the tempting vine was delicately painted porcelain and the wine was bubbles with cotton in them raised an innocent laugh; but practical jokers preferred those filled with red pepper. "Indian turn-ups" used to be the great study in the west, and a big life of one would make the victim feel as if his tongue were being pulled out by the roots, but the plant is now so rare that many people never saw one. A truly diabolical contrivance was a small pudding, of which the principal ingredient was mustard.

In France the fun chiefly consists in sending people on absurd errands or sending them messages which begin properly enough but end in an atrocious "well." Practical jokes are there plentifully unknown. The French call the victim a "poisson d'avril"—that is, a fish of April or April fish. The Scotch call him a "covey," which means both cuckoo and simpleton, and has been Americanized into gawk. In Germany he is called a "Scheincolport," or simply a fool, while in all eastern Europe much more derisive names are applied, some of them, as well as the jokes, being very coarse and even grossly obscene.

Now, as the custom has been common to all Christian countries for over 1,500 years, scholars formerly agreed that it began in the mischievous pranks of the dark ages. It was generally said to represent the sending about of Christ from Ann to Gethsemane, and from Pilate to Herod. By and by, however, traces of the custom were discovered at



THE "BRICKED" HAT.

an earlier date, and then the explanation given was that when the beginning of the year was changed from April 1 to Jan. 1 the people turned the first day from a real into a mock New Year's and pursued all the solemn and social observances of the main day.

This story did very well till a better was told; for when the British rule in India was well established, and scholars reproduced the customs of that land, they found traces of April Fool day there, and the Hindus now practice similar tricks on the 31st of March.

which they call the Holi festival. So the origin must be referred to some trait of the old system of nature worship which was the religion of the primitive Aryans. No doubt some peculiarity of the season, perhaps the general rise of the natural man's blood and of awakening nature, first suggested a day of sport and unreason. In the course of time many of the tricks and practical jokes of April 1 were confounded with those of the Feast of Fools, which must take rank as the most extraordinary of the many fantastic follies which old paganism bequeathed to Christianity.

It began with the Saturnalia. The Romans believed that Saturn, after being dethroned by his son Jupiter, had reigned long in Italy and established a golden age. So they had a Saturn's festival late in December, when all strict etiquette was laid aside and all distinctions of rank abolished. Slaves ate first and were waited on by their masters. Dainty ladies served food to beggars. No one could claim any privilege of rank, and in some instances the license extended so far that men of wealth and distinction thought it prudent to maintain a disguise during the entire festival. The Christian fathers preached against the custom, but it survived, and at last obtained a tolerated place in church observances.

Every age the absurdity grew greater. Belshazzar's Feast was introduced and soon became the great central figure. Later, the ass on which the infant Jesus was carried into Egypt and the ass on which the mature Jesus rode into Jerusalem were introduced with many ceremonies, which would shock modern Christians. Mock popes, archbishops and other dignitaries were chosen and held local rule through the festival, being known as "Popes of Fools," "Archbishops of Numb-skulls," "Boy Bishops" and "Patrons of Fools." They took possession of the churches and went through a mimicry of the priestly offices, even the mass and the absolution. At length the burlesque reached a point where reason and religion alike revolted. Rituals were issued for the mock worship, and the ass was introduced into the church. Many songs were written in its honor. One sung for many years at Beauvais, France, as the ass moved towards the altar, ran as follows:

Orients parthous—  
Orients parthous—  
Pulchre fortissimus,  
Sarcinis aptissimus.  
Tis, Sire Ass, ho!

This has been somewhat freely translated:

From the regions of the east—  
Blessings on the heavy load—  
Came the donkey stout and strong,  
With our packs to pass along.

Then the mock priests, with real priestly robes worn inside out, holding prayer books upside down and wearing spectacles made of leopards' paws, went through a service, in which they ridiculed at random the local follies. Sometimes charcoal and flour or noxious smelling weed seeds were used for incense, and the service went on amid a confused uproar of imitations of pigs, cows and asses. When the ceremony was to close the priest placed his hands beside his head, moved them like ears and bayed his loudest three times, to which the people responded with a loud and prolonged bay. In many places asses disguised themselves in men's clothes and took part.

When the custom reached such abuses reform was not far off, but traces of it lingered till the fifteenth century. Remnants of these observances passed over to Christianity and April Fool's day. On very ancient monuments April is typified by a dancing



young with a rattle in his hand—another proof that something in the season itself suggested sport and practical jokes. And as the growing and peering season is here, this article cannot close more appropriately than with the oft-quoted but still readable lines in which an old mispriser lawyer is supposed to have said the reason that reminded him of his youth:

Now divers birds are heard to sing,  
And sunny flocks their heads upraise—  
Hail to the coming of spring!

The songs of those said birds arouse  
The memory of our youthful frolics.  
As green as these said birds and blossoms,  
As fresh and sweet as those said flowers.

The birds abroad—happy pairs!  
Love 'till the forehead laughs, their beaks  
In freedom taste; themselves, their heirs,  
Administrators and assigns.

O, happiest time of Cupid's court,  
Where tender playful advances bring—  
A flood of love, such as the sun  
Hail as a precious, coming spring!

At Home, After Many Years.

The return to Chicago, after thirteen years' absence, of D. D. Spencer, brings again to public attention a man who reaches financial heights wrought widespread fame. He had in 1877 immediately subsequent to the failure of the Cook County National bank and the State Savings institution, both of which were under his control, and became a resident of Stuttgart, Germany. He left behind a terrible legacy of misery for the savings of hundreds were wrecked up, but it has always been an open question whether Spencer was not rather the dupe of others than a willful wrong doer. At any rate the years have not dealt lightly with him, and those who knew the aggressive, confident, business man of other days would find little to recall him by in the careworn, aged features of the returned exile.

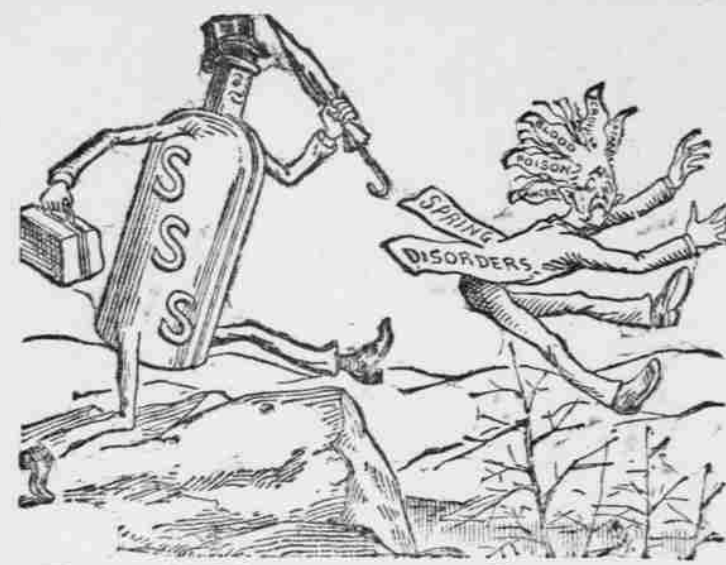
A Female Railway President.

The first woman in America ever chosen president of a national railroad is Mrs. Charles D. Haines.

The line of which she is the chief officer is the Houston and Texas Central, in Texas. Mrs. Haines' husband, in association with others, is the owner of several short railroads in various states of the Union. Mrs. Haines is said to be an excellent business woman, and well fitted for the position to which she has been elevated.

The Latest Fad in White.

The latest fad in Chicago which circles the "duplicitous" game. In this play the cards are dealt once, the opposing clubs change places after the first hands have been played, and playing with the cards originally held by their opponents, a record of each player's hand having been kept upon memorandum tablets prepared therefor. The object of this method is to prevent the possibility of cheating becoming a factor of success. —Chicago Tribune.



## THE FLIGHT OF DISEASE.

When S. S. S. appears on the ground, disease is routed. It drives blood poison out of the system. It cures Skin Cancer by forcing the poison out of the blood through the cancer itself, and the pores of the skin. It is death to Spring disorders, and is a sure cure for skin diseases.

MANVILLE, IND. TEN., January 23, '90.  
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WALLACE MANN.

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MORRIS H. WOLFE.

WALDO, FLA., Feb. 11th, 1890.  
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Protecting the Glass.

A reporter for The Chicago Journal mentions an incident which will probably explain to many readers the meaning of something they have probably many times seen without ever thinking to ask for an explanation.

While passing along Dearborn street yesterday I saw a crowd watching the placing in position of some enormous panes of glass in a handsome new building. The glass was put in as carefully as if it were worth something more than a week's wages. The task of putting it in place was no sooner completed than one of the workmen grabbed a lot of whitening and with a big brush daubed a lot of meaningless marks on it.

I thought it about as silly a thing as a man could do, and with the usual curiosity of a reporter, asked the foreman what he allowed it.

"Why," said he, "we have to mark them that way or they'd be smashed in no time."

My look of amazement doubtless prompted him to further explanation, for he said: "You see the workmen around a new building go in the customary manner, hammer, through the open shaft before the glass is put in. They would continue to do it even after the glass is in if we didn't do something to attract their attention. That's the reason you always see new windows daubed with glaring white marks. Give it a chance, and the workmen don't start to shove a stick of timber through a costly plate of glass, he will stop short when his eye catches the danger sign. That white mark is just a signal which says: 'Look out; you'll break me if you are not careful!'"

Embarrassing.

Children sometimes tell the truth at the most inopportune moments, much to the discomfort of their elders. One correspondent, who relates that a lady he has acquaintance, whose home was charmingly managed, had two requis, irrepressible boys.

One afternoon this lady had company. She was particularly anxious to produce a favorable impression and took great pains for this purpose. She prepared an elaborate supper. The guests and family were gathered about the tea table, when one of the boys surprised his mother by exclaiming during a lull in the conversation, "Tell you what, ma, we don't have such a supper 'till very often, do we?"

There was a momentary pause; the hostess blushed, and then said with a laugh: "No, Johnnie, this is a company supper."

The reply and the little laugh prevented any feeling of awkwardness.

After supper the company retired to the parlor, where the lamps were lighted, and the hostess sat down to read another story at his mother's weak armor.

"Oh, ma," he cried, "you've borrowed Aunt Sally's new lamp, ain't you?"

If annoyed, the mother did not betray it, but smiling grimaces to her guests, she said: "It's not my lamp, it's my borrowed lamp with my boys."—Youth's Companion.

Embryo Geniuses.

Young inventors have become about as numerous as poets of late. There is an aspiring age, and money figures very largely in the day dreams of our youth. So much has been said about the incomes of Edison and other great inventors that young persons of talent (if no longer relieve their overburdened minds by dreaming of verse or reciting, copy extracts from Shakespeare's "Hamlet," or "Richard III," but they have begun to peer along with electricity, or tinkering with metals, or endeavor to penetrate the secret of perpetual motion, or to accomplish some other wild and altogether absurd and impossible thing. You have no idea how many entire geniuses there are fitting about the streets, or wearily measuring cloth, or weighing butter for the modest stipend of from \$4 to \$8 per week.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

There is in India a little serpent, only a few inches long, called eury carinata, which is so horribly venomous that its bite is capable of causing death in two or three seconds. Not a single case is known of recovery from the bite of eury carinata, where the snake has struck its victim on the bare flesh, without any fatal intervening; but in most instances the sufferer has been paralyzed with intense agony almost instantaneously, the blood has coagulated in the veins and a spasm of the heart has terminated the existence almost before any remedy could be even attempted. —Edgar L. Wakeman in Fitzhugh Dispatch.

A Chapter on Shoes.

A writer, in answer to the question, "Are more shoes worn out in wet than in dry weather?" says there are more actually worn out, particularly at the bottoms, when the walking is fine; but the destruction of shoes is at least 25 per cent. greater during wet soles.—New York Commercial Advertiser.

Educated Sanitarians.

Mrs. Natalie Doronoff is a young French girl who is known in Paris as "the youthful lion tamer," and whose control over dumb beasts is absolutely incomprehensible. In this country she will handle and train nothing but alligators, crocodiles and armadillos. Mrs. Doronoff's "school" contains thirty alligators of various sizes, the largest measuring twenty feet in length and weighing two hundred and fifty pounds. The lady and her crotchets variously wrap at everybody who approaches them, except their fearless mistress, who sits among her scaly pets for hours each day and who apparently does not know what fear means. The alligators and crocodiles are put through a regular drill at each performance and they seem to understand every word and gesture of their fair tutor. —Merchant Traveler.

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